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# SCIENCE

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## THE WAR AND THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY<sup>1</sup>

PHILADELPHIA was the cradle of chemistry in this country. What was possibly the first chemical society in the world was founded here in 1792. A few years later one of its members addressing the society said:

The only true basis on which the independence of our country can rest is agriculture and manufactures. To the promotion of these nothing tends in a higher degree than chemistry. It is this science which teaches man how to correct the bad qualities of the land he cultivates by a proper application of the various species of manure, and it is by means of a knowledge of this science that he is enabled to pursue the metals through the various forms they put on in the earth, separate them from substances which render them useless, and at length manufacture them into various forms for use and ornament as we see them. If such are the effects of chemistry, how much should the wish for its promotion be excited in the heart of every American! It is to a general diffusion of knowledge of this science, next to the virtue of our countrymen, that we are to look for the firm establishment of our independence. And may your endeavors, gentlemen, in this cause, entitle you to the gratitude of your fellow citizens.

Considering the time when these words were spoken, we must marvel at the vision of the future which must have illumined the mind of the speaker. If in the last clause quoted he had said "ladies and gentlemen" it would have been complete.

But Philadelphia was also the cradle of the chemical industry in this country, and up to the present day occupies a very important part of that field. Some of the pleasantest recollections of my earlier life

<sup>1</sup> Address complimentary to the citizens of Philadelphia given by Dr. Wm. H. Nichols at the Philadelphia Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.